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Union. The Union imposes a penalty of $10 upon members, if they play with a non-member, for the first offence, $20 for the second, and expulsion for the third. This concert would have constituted the second offence. A member of the Union states that "once a non-member of the Association, a musician would find it impossible to live, as they are only engaged by Mr. Damrosch for six months, and the other portion of the year they would be unable to secure an engagement if they were out of the Union." Mr. Damrosch is endeavouring to get the clause repealed which requires new-comers to live in the country for six months before they can become members of the Union. It appears to us that Mr. Damrosch, being a member, would have been adopting a more loyal course in waiting till the clause was repealed before engaging the 'cellist. As he did not wait, the experiment was purely his own; if it turned out a bad one he must blame himself. To strike upon the platform, in full view of the audience, is, no doubt, going very far. As things go here, we believe that orchestral players will say that the concert platform is not the place for a strike. But if it can be said that the members of the orchestra in question should have chosen some other place to assert themselves, the version of the occurrence given by Mr. Damrosch to a reporter shows, on the other hand, that the position of affairs had been fairly pointed out to him long before. Mr. Damrosch had agreed to wait for the quarterly meeting of the Union, when the question of repealing the "six months" clause was to be brought up. The time came, but the clause was not repealed. Mr. Damrosch characterises the clause as a most outrageous one. Mr. Bremer, the President of the Union, remarks:—"If it is outrageous, Mr. Damrosch is as much to blame for its existence as anyone. He has been a member of the Union for many years, and never thought about the clause until it interfered with certain schemes of his own."

From all accounts it would seem that it is as difficult for an orchestral musician to earn a living in America as it is here. The Secretary of the Union says:—"There has been a great deal of talk about the six months clause. There was a great deal more hardship experienced before it existed. Then operatic and concert managers used to import entire orchestras at prices upon which it was next to impossible to live." When capable players see new-comers placed in the highest positions by those whose fame has been achieved in their own midst, it cannot but engender feelings of bitterness, which it may be dangerous to exasperate. Mr. Damrosch must have felt this when he addressed the audience, and said, in allusion to the Symphony Concerts, "it is a very painful thing to me to witness the destruction of a fabric which I have been at such pains to rear." Last year orchestral players in this country had good cause to feel very bitter about a case of importation, though here it was not a matter of one instrumentalist, but a large number of instrumentalists, and of an inferior order. We recall Handel's modest address to the British public, in which he says, it is "my duty, with my Small Talent, to serve a nation from which I have receiv'd so generous a protection." These words might well be remembered by people who nowadays receive a generous protection in their adopted country. In acting according to the spirit of such a faith they would but render their position more secure. If the Symphony Concerts had been broken up, as Mr. Damrosch announced he feared they would be, his experiment with the 'cellist would hardly have won him the thanks of his patrons; and it may be that, whether the clause objected to by him be ultimately repealed or not, it will take him some time to regain in the fullest measure the goodwill and confidence of the resident musicians who may continue to work with him, and with whose assistance he has already obtained so many laurels.

LADIES AS ORCHESTRAL PLAYERS.

BY

WALLACE SUTCLIFFE.

"This is the woman's century," and orchestral musicians are beginning to fully realise that fact. The question, Should ladies be admitted into professional orchestras? is becoming with us one of the prominent topics of the day. Comments complimentary and uncomplimentary—especially the latter—are freely indulged in; but no serious investigation as to their capacity for such work, and its social suitability, seems to have been made. By claiming so-called "equal rights with man," the females of the present era are gradually revolutionizing the old accepted theories of what is "womanly," and we now find them practising and employed in arts and crafts that a few years ago would have been unhesitatingly termed "unwomanly." In the words of a contemporary: "The banks are now taking on female clerks and female cashiers, women are being admitted to the police force, the lady detective is the bright particular star of the private inquiry office, some of the newly-established newspapers are almost entirely worked by a female staff, the lady guide and the lady courier are distinct features of our modern civilisation, *lady orchestras are being organised in every direction*, the lady commercial traveller has taken to the road, ladies have taken to pleading their own causes in the courts of law, the lady doctor is very much in evidence, and the clergywoman would doubtless be banging the pulpit cushion if only the opportunity were given her."

That there are manners and customs, arts and crafts, peculiar and distinctively adapted to each of the sexes, will be scarcely disputed. Thus, heavy, arduous, mechanical labour, and all work entailing long, severe, mental strain, is constitutionally more adapted to man than woman, whilst work requiring intricate and delicate manipulation, and patient subtilty of mind, is naturally more suitable to the latter. The old idea that woman is fit for nothing more than housekeeping and dress-making has long been deservedly exploded; but lately, the ladies' "flowers of progress" have been growing apace, and people are beginning to shake their heads, and think they rather "*more* than justify their name," and grow rather *too* fast. At any rate, we know many orchestral musicians who are very sore at heart on the ladies' orchestra question.

As partially showing what is being done at present, we may here quote a paragraph from the last issue of our GAZETTE

"Orchestral musicians appear to be threatened with a new form of competition. The engagement of a Ladies' Orchestra, comprising sixty instrumentalists, for 'Noah's Ark,' at Covent Garden, deprives a number of men of an engagement which, at least from a monetary point of view, would be acceptable at this season of the year, especially to those who have a family to provide for.

But this is not the first engagement of a ladies' orchestra in a London theatre. There was one at the Princess's Theatre during the eighteen week's run of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." A ladies' orchestra played on the stage during one dance at the Lyric Theatre some time back; and there was an orchestra of forty-two once engaged at the Aquarium, and we hear there is a likelihood of the experiment being tried again. At present, we believe managers engage a ladies' orchestra more because it is a novelty, than because they can secure ladies' services for smaller salaries than would be the case with male players, as so many of us are apt to suppose. The tendency of women in taking employment to do so for smaller wages than men would accept is a great evil, leading as it does to a deterioration in salaries throughout the entire trade or profession. The social status of the orchestral musician has been gradually degenerating for many years past. The market is already over-stocked with players, many finding it hard work to make even a bare livelihood. Fees are getting "beautifully less and less," but however small they may be, there are always players to be found only too willing to accept them. These are a few of the evils our Association has to fight against. How much more will these evils be multiplied if this new movement of engaging ladies in professional orchestras takes root and grows, as it bids fair to do?

Returning to the Covent Garden orchestra, we find it is not wholly composed of ladies; there are five exceptions—two cornets, two trombones, and an euphonium. When the Rev. E. H. Moberly's ladies' string orchestra gave a concert at the St. James's Hall in May last, they had to fall back upon the sterner sex for five double basses. Other similar cases might be cited, but these will serve our purpose, emphatically directing one's attention as they do to the ladies' orchestras' weakest point—lack of strength, individually and collectively. Lack of physical power has always and will always hamper women in any arduous work. According to physiologists, there is one muscle entirely absent from the female arm. Thus, power of tone is always lacking. If we take our great instrumental virtuosi as an example, do we ever find the same strength, power, and breadth of tone in the female exponents as in the male? And if this question must be answered in the negative, how must it be with the comparatively small fry that wish to flock into the orchestras? But against this lack of strength we must note a great charm which ladies' orchestras do, or should, possess—delicacy and refinement. But unfortunately for ladies, delicacy and refinement alone do not suffice. What is wanted in orchestral playing is the combination of strength, delicacy, and refinement, together with firmness of attack—another weak point in the ladies' armour. How often we find, where a lady is responsible, a lamentable want of decision in taking up a lead. Most ladies having naturally a nervous dread of making themselves conspicuous by making a mistake in coming in at the wrong place—making a "domino" in fact—accounts for this. Men have more impudence. We have often been amused at the unblushing, unconcious way a male professional will carry off the most conspicuous blunder! But his audacity makes him more reliable, for there is seldom any hesitation. The violins are of course the best and strongest in a ladies' orchestra; as for the other strings, the bigger the fiddle the less the tone. The wind section is always the poorest—I had almost said always poor. We of course speak of ladies collectively, not individually. We have many undoubtedly clever artistic lady instrumentalists, both of wind and strings; but the average lady player is inferior to the average male player for all orchestral purposes.

Turning to the social side of the argument. In the early months of last year, a series of letters appeared in a musical paper on our subject, and we here present two extracts on its social suitability. The first, from the pen of Mr. W. Tyacke George, is short, but contains a wholesome truth:—"The lot of an orchestral player is by no means a honeyed one, and a twelve years' rough apprenticeship at theatres and music halls would affect an educated, refined, and sensitive girl physically, and probably morally." The other extract, signed E.S., is longer, and deals more generally with the subject:—"The duties of an orchestral player are ever arduous, sometimes exacting to a degree; and if fatigue and occasional exhaustion are now experienced by those who perform these duties, how much greater would be the sufferings of the feebler sex, whose constitutions are naturally delicate and comparatively weak? I believe that a positive breakdown would be in many cases the inevitable result. Again, the protracted and wearying rehearsals, lasting sometimes from seven o'clock in the evening until three the following morning, would scarcely be a recommendation to the feminine mind; while the undesirability of a lady having, probably without companionship, to wend her way home at such an uncanny hour need not be further commented upon. Then, too, the unguarded language which the theatre employées make such liberal use of within earshot of the band room, could not fail to shock the admittedly refined nature of a woman. Thus much for employment at the theatre or music hall. As for engagements in connection with balls, soirées, etc, the very late hour at which such functions usually terminate, once more crops up as an objection well-nigh insuperable. Lastly, not only are the orchestras of the present time already occupied by competent players, but there are always waiting any number of applicants for admission, and, under these circumstances, conductors would scarcely care about entering into negotiations with female candidates, when it is in their power to obtain at any moment as many male executants as they require." There is no need for me to say more. If ladies *are* to enter the field as orchestral players, why should it not be to work alongside with us? In some respects it would be a happy combination. We should at least have the benefit of their delicacy and refinement, and they would be upheld by our strength and nerve. There was, and is still, we believe, a lady flautist and drummer at the Standard Theatre. This is, however, the only case of mixing the sexes in a theatre orchestra that has come within our notice, and the female element is too slight to quote it as an example. A purely ladies' orchestra I think is not likely to secure a permanent footing in theatre orchestras; the work is usually of too heavy a description to warrant it. Light concert work, soirées, at homes, etc., are more suitable and are more likely to fall to their lot. It remains with managers and the ladies themselves to give the decisive answer to the question, Shall ladies be admitted into professional orchestras?

ART CRITICS AND MUSICAL CONDUCTORS.

Many people seeing this conjunction of titles will, perhaps, not unnaturally, exclaim, "What connection or affinity can these avocations have with each other?" At first sight the query seems reasonable, but on closer inspection one finds that they are intimately connected, inasmuch as both critics and conductors seem to be "heaven-born." Who ever heard of a man being brought up with a special view of his becoming an art critic? To be such he must know a little (sometimes he knows very little) of many things; but when or how is the critical faculty fostered? A man might be a very good judge of pigs, because as one pig is, so is another; but, supposing the same man had never seen or heard of a pig, what pretensions would he have to be considered a judge? Yet this is precisely the position of the art critic when he begins his career. At this period the weight of his opinion is, as a rule, balanced by that of his style, but when it be considered that the art critic, never having learnt his business, cannot be otherwise than Heaven-inspired, small wonder is there that men listen to him with awed look and bated breath. Years